

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 6440

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CI, PINT, SHUM

SUBJECT: CARDINAL'S SERMON ON INDEPENDENCE DAY

REF: SANTIAGO 6316

1. SUMMARY: DURING TRADITIONAL INDEPENDENCE DAY TE DEUM SEPTEMBER 18 WITH TOP GOC LEADERS AND FOREIGN VISITORS IN CONGREGATION, CARDINAL DEVELOPED THEME OF CHRISTIAN LOVE IN TERMS THAT CAN BE TAKEN AT LEAST TWO WAYS. SOME GOC SUPPORTERS WERE PLEASED THAT CARDINAL WAS FINALLY ON RIGHT TRACK. CHURCH SOURCE, HOWEVER, CONFIRMED SERMON WAS REALLY STRONG CRITICISM OF GOC ATTITUDES, AN OPINION REPORTEDLY SHARED BY SOME ARMY OFFICERS. EMBASSY CAN BELIEVE GOC GOT THE MESSAGE -- POLITE BUT FIRM PROD TO GET GOC MOVING ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND AGAINST POVERTY. END SUMMARY.

2. RAUL CARDINAL SILVA SPOKE AT LENGTH ON IMPORTANCE OF DIGNITY OF MAN AND HIS FREEDOM IN CONCEPT OF CHRISTIAN LOVE. HE SPOKE APPROVINGLY OF "OUR NATIONAL, HUMANIST AND CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS" AS PRESENTED IN JUNTA'S DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND REAFFIRMED BY PRESIDENT PINOCHET IN SEPTEMBER 11 SPEECH AND HE PRAISED PINOCHET AND GOC FOR THEIR EXPRESSED CONCERN FOR PLIGHT OF POOR. WITH REGARD TO LATTER POINT, CARDINAL IMMEDIATELY WARNED THAT ACTIONS NOT WORDS ARE NEEDED; AND HE SAID POINTEDLY THAT MAN CANNOT BE "SACRIFICED FOR A TOMORROW OR A SOME TIME, AND
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DEFINITELY NOT FOR A GENERATION." HE CONSELLED AGAINST LOOKING

TO THE PAST ONLY IN ORDER TO KEEP ANIMOSITIES ALIVE.

3. CARDINAL'S AUDIENCE INCLUDED PINOCHET AND OTHER JUNTA MEMBERS, AND VISITING PRESIDENT BORDABERRY OF URUGUAY.

4. ESPISCOPAL SECRETARY BISHOP CAMUS SEPTEMBER 22, TOLD EMBOFF THAT SERMON WAS INTENDED AS STRONG CRITICISM OF GENERAL GOC ATTITUDE AND DIRECTION. SAID CHURCHMEN HAD BEEN IRRITATED BY PINOCHET'S DEFINITION OF GOC AS CHRISTIAN; CHURCH WANTS TO SEE GOC ACTIONS BASED ON TRUE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTS AND NOT JUST WORDS TO THAT EFFECT. HE NOTED THAT CHURCH HAS NOW DEFINED TWO FUNDAMENTAL CHRISTIAN CONCEPTS FOR GOC (RETEL REPORTED BISHOPS' DOCUMENT ON PEACE), AND OPINED THAT CURRENT GOC ATTITUDE AND POLICY ARE NOT, IN FACT, BASED ON THESE CONCEPTS.

5. SOME GOC SUPPORTERS, HOWEVER, TOLD US THEY WERE HIGHLY PLEASED WITH SERMON. ONE OFFICIAL SAID THE "RED" CARDINAL HAD FINALLY RECOGNIZED THAT GOC IS ON THE RIGHT TRACK, AND GIVEN CREDIT WHERE DUE. CONSERVATIVE "EL MERCURIO" SEPTEMBER 23 COMMENTED THAT SERMON GAVE NO INDICATION THERE IS ANY DISTANCE BETWEEN JUNTA AND CHURCH. MISSION HAS ANOTHER RELIABLE REPORT, HOWEVER, THAT SOME SENIOR ARMY OFFICERS CAUGHT THE SERMON'S MEANING AND ARE ANGRY.

6. COMMENT; CHURCH'S DEFINITIONS OF PEACE AND LOVE ARE PERHAPS STRONGEST PUBLIC CRITICISM FO GOC TO DATE, IF READ CAREFULLY. CRITICISM IS MADE IN A BROAD RELIGIOUS CONTEXT, HOWEVER, THAT REDUCES ITS IMPACT AND ENABLES GOC AND SUPPORTERS TO SAY RELATIONS ARE GOOD.

7. CAMUS COMMENTED THAT PINOCHET'S SEPTEMBER 11 SPEECH HAD BEEN DEPRESSING IN ITS REVELATION OF GOVERNMENT'S IDEAS FOR CHILE'S POLITICAL FUTURE. HE SAID SERMON AS A GENERAL DOCUMENT HAD BEEN DRAFTED BEFORE SPEECH, ALTHOUGH SOME TOPICAL REFERENCES HAD BEEN ADDED. WE NEVERTHELESS HAVE IMPRESSION THAT CARDINAL TOOK PINOCHET'S WORDS AND THREW THEM BACK AT GOC IN ATTEMPT TO PROD IT INTO FURTHER ACTION. AS IS WAY OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP NOW, CHALLENGE WAS HANDLED SO AS TO AVOID CONFRONTATION. POPPER

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